THE TIT-BIT.

A TALE.

——— *Cunnus teterrima Belli*
Cauſa.——

HORAT.

LONDON:

Printed for T. COOPER, at the *Globe* in *Pater-noſter-Row*, 1738.

(Price Six-pence.)

BRITISH MUSEUM

The *TIT-BIT.* *A* TALE.

A WAGGISH Jeſt, if cleanly told,
As many witty Moderns hold,
May be the moſt effectual Way
A well-drawn Moral to convey;
Prior's *Purganti* and his *Hans*
Confirm the Maxim I advance:
And hum'rous *Swift* and *Gay*, we find,
And many more of *Prior*'s Mind.
The Reaſon which they never told,
And which the Muſe ſhall here unfold,
In one ſhort Line is eaſy ſaid;
A ſmutty Tale is oft'neſt read.
Who took up *Prior*, but wou'd marvel
To find no Leaf turn'd down at *Carvel!*
And *Gay*'s *Mad-Dog*, and eke his *Cooper*,
To Miſs are ſweeter than her Supper.
Few ſee a miſcellaneous Book,
But firſt into the Index look;
Grave Things we paſs unheeded by,
And for the ſmutty Story pry:
Our Eyes are drawn from Line to Line,
Our Thoughts collect the whole Deſign,
And if there be a Moral in't,
Few read it, but muſt take the Hint.
THESE Points debated, and agreed,
Next, to our Moral we proceed.
BEYOND whatever has been wrote,
Or Lover own'd, or Poet taught,
Imperious Women bear the Sway,
And Men, their eaſy Slaves, obey:
In vain we ſtruggle to be free,
In vain we ſigh for Liberty;
For all our Efforts to get looſe,
Serve faſter ſtill to tie the Nooſe.
SAY Men of Learning, if you can,
Whence this Fatality began;

And why is Man the only Creature,
That ſinks ſo much below his Nature.
Look round among the brutal Kind,
Not one Example can we find ;
Of every Bird, and every Beaſt,
The Male ſuperiour is confeſt;
But Man we ſee the only Fool,
That meanly yields his Right to rule,
And when he ſhould aſſert Command,
Trembles beneath a weaker Hand.
Even I, who fain wou'd vent my Rage,
Before I've ſcribled half a Page,
Start at the Thought of what I've done,
And quake for Fear of *Delia*'s Frown;
And ſhou'd the haughty Maid be nigh,
With Anger glaring in her Eye,
I ſhou'd deny my own Hand-Writing,
And ſwear this was not my Inditing.

JULIO (not young) had Store of Wealth,
Good-Nature, Chearfulneſs and Health;
He thought he wanted but a Wife,
To ſweeten every Joy of Life.
The lovely She at length was found,
That gave his Heart the deadly Wound;
He urg'd his Paſſion, preſt his Suit,
Papa was ask'd, and yielded to't;
The Lawyer came, the Terms were drawn,
The wiſht-for Morning too come on;
The Parſon read, the Knot was ty'd,
And Miſs became the Lover's Bride.

UNNUMBER'D flew the Hours away
Of many a pleaſant, happy Day;
And fondeſt Love, and ſoft Delight,
Made charming many a precious Night.
Forever let the Morn be bleſt,
That gave my deareſt to my Breaſt!
The fond tranſported Husband cry'd;
While ſhe in equal Terms reply'd.

SWEET is the Bliſs that Love affords,
When no intruding Care diſcords;

But ſoon the fleeting Pleaſure's loſt,
A Week, a Month, a Year at moſt,
Aſunder cuts the pleaſing Chain,
And all to come is Strife and Pain.

SCARCE half the Year had roll'd away,
But Madam long'd to go aſtray;
Her Husband cou'd no more diſpenſe
The much-required Benevolence;
He, like a Novice at the Play,
Had ſquander'd in few Weeks away,
What, with OEconomy and Care,
Might have excus'd him for the Year;
And as ſhe view'd within the Glaſs
The growing Beauties of her Face,
She thought ſhe might with Reaſon claim
A larger Portion of *that ſame*;
And what a lazy Husband wou'd
Not do, a ſprightly Lover ſhou'd.

A handſome Woman with ſuch Notions
Seldom wants Sparks to watch her Motions;
Each Evening, dreſt extreamly gay,
She viſited the *Park* and *Play*;
At Ten, Eleven, Twelve, or more,
Return'd, gallanted to the Door.

ALAS! what ſhou'd a Husband do?
He ſometimes rated her, 'tis true;
And told her plain that ſuch a Life
Did ill become a virtuous Wife;
That this Coquetting up and down,
Wou'd raiſe the Talk of half the Town,
And tho' ſhe did no real Wrong,
It wou'd not ſtop the cenſuring Tongue:
He beg'd her to conſider too,
That Slander gather'd as it flew;
And Things, that ſcarce were Faults at firſt,
Grew, by repeating, Crimes accurſt.
He then diſcanted on the Town,
And ſhew'd how vile the Rakes were grown;
That all the Buſineſs of their Lives
Lay in ſeducing virtuous Wives;

And, Satan like, from Hour to Hour,
They wander'd, ſeeking to devour.
A thouſand Things beſides he ſaid,
Too long to write, and eke to read:
In ſhort, to cloſe his Speech, he tipt her
A clinching Paſſage from the Scripture;
Says he, we read in ſacred Writ,
That Wives to Husbands ſhou'd ſubmit;
And what the holy Scriptures ſay,
I'm ſure my Fair One will obey.

HERE Madam roſe —— And have you done,
Or muſt I ſit and here your on?
Moſt wiſely, learned Sir, have you
Shewn, what from Wife to Husband's due;
But ſure my Deareſt does forget.
That Wives may alſo claim a Debt;
A Debt, betwixt us two, I fear,
You have not Stock enough to clear.
And pray, if I may ſpeak, ſweet Sir,
What do you think I marry'd for?
Was it to ſit the whole Day long,
And liſten to your charming Tongue?
There were ſome Pleaſures, Sir, I thought,
But to your Shame I ſcarce know what!
Wou'd you adviſe, and have me hear,
Let your own Duty firſt appear;
Nor ſhall you, like the Cur in Fable,
While not to eat a Bit your're able,
Sit and keep others from the Table. ——
She ended with a careleſs Frown,
And ſnap'd her Fingers, and ſat down.

LONG this uneaſy Life they led,
Noiſe four'd the Board, and Striſe the Bed;
He beg'd, ſhe ſcold'd, and went on
In the ſame Way ſhe had begun.

GRIEF for her Conduct, as 'tis thought,
A Fever on the Husband brought;
In Haſte he ſends for her Relations,
And tells the Cauſe of his Vexations.

They

They talk'd her over to be ſure ——
Such Crimes no Mortal cou'd endure!
And ſuch an Husband too —— for Shame!
She brought a Scandal on her Name;
And if ſhe did not quickly mend,
They knew too well where all muſt end.
SHE heard it all with Looks demure.
Her Husband dares not ſay it ſure?
Cou'd he on her unjuſtly lay
The Wrongs ſhe ſuffer'd every Day?
Alas! 'twas her continu'd Care,
Her fixt Deſire, her earneſt Pray'r,
Or rich, or poor, in Health, or Pain,
Her conſtant Duty to maintain;
Thro' all the Joys, or Ills of Life,
To be his moſt obedient Wife;
And well her kind Concern was paid,
By the genteel Return he made,
When 'twou'd not win him to afford
One tender Look, or civil Word! —
But why ſhou'd ſhe thus tire their Patience
In making formal Vindications?
Wou'd they that Moment follow her,
She'd glaring make her Wrongs appear.
Here, *Betty*, *Betty*, — calls my Lady
See if your Maſter's Chicken's ready.
Yes, Madam. —— Quickly bring it up,
'Tis now you know his Hour to ſup.
The Chicken comes; up Madam goes,
And all ſteal after on their Toes:
Alone ſhe enters, ſhuts the Door,
And lays the Plate upon the Floor:
The Damask Curtains wide ſhe drew,
To give her Spouſe a perfect View,
And, lifting up her Cloaths, made bare ——
What modeſt Verſe muſt not declare;
Then with exalted Voice cries out,
(That all might hear, who ſtood without,)
" See here, my Life, what I have got,
" See what your loving Wife has brought ——

" Nay

" Nay, don't you frown, I have it here;
" Come riſe, and pick a Bit, my Dear:
" 'Tis ſtrange you ſhou'd not like ſuch Food;
" Indeed my Love 'twill do you good:
" Lord, 'tis ſo long ago you eat,
" I'm ſure you'll think it mighty ſweet!
She had run on, if more their needed,
But to her Wiſh ſhe had ſucceeded;
He in a raging Paſſion flew,
And at her Head his Slipper threw:
He call'd her vile, laſcivious Beaſt,
How wicked to diſturb his Reſt,
By ſuch a brutal Impudence!
Hence from his Sight, a Monſter, hence!
In ruſh'd the People at the Door,
Loud as a rapid Torrent's Roar,
They found the Dame o'erwhelm'd in Tears,
And ſinking underneath her Cares:
" Why this is mighty pretty truly,
" Is this the Wife that's ſo unruly?
" And are you not a wicked Man
" Of ſo much Virtue to complain? ------
Lord will you hear me ſpeak? ------ " But know,
" You ſhall not think to uſe her ſo ------
I uſe her! ----- Zounds ----- " Nay hold your Tongue,
" And ſtudy to redreſs the Wrong. -----
Redreſs the Wrong! ----- O Lord, O Lord! -----
Pray hear me but one ſingle Word.
She laid her Hand upon her ---- " Sir,
" We ſhan't your vile Abuſes hear,
" This Uſage is not to be born;
" Go beg Forgiveneſs, and reform.
In vain the Husband ſtrain'd his Voice,
None heard, 'twas Uproar all, and Noiſe;
The Room they quitted, down they came,
All pity'd the much injur'd Dame.
'Twas hard a Wife ſo good, ſo kind,
Shou'd ſuch inhuman Treatment find!
And O, how much they'd been deceiv'd,
When they the Husband's Tale believ'd!

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